

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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**December 21, 2004**

**FROM:**     **NORMAN A. KANOLD**, Assistant County Administrator  
                  Economic Development/Public Services Group

**PETER HILLS**, Fire Chief/Fire Warden  
                  San Bernardino County Consolidated Fire District

**SUBJECT: CONTINUATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY RELATIVE TO HEAVY RAINFALL, FLOODING,  
AND DEBRIS FLOWS FROM RAINSTORMS**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue the Emergency Proclamation originally proclaimed by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors on October 20, 2004, and ratified by the members of the Board on October 26, 2004, concerning the existence of a Local Emergency in San Bernardino County, as a result of heavy rainfall, flooding, and debris flow from rainstorms, which emergency still exists and continues to be an emergency.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** On October 20, 2004, the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, acting as the Director of Emergency Services of the County of San Bernardino, proclaimed the existence of a local emergency in San Bernardino County, as a result of heavy rainfall, flooding, and debris flow from rainstorms. On October 26, 2004, by majority vote, the members of the Board of Supervisors ratified the proclamation as required per California Government Code section 8630(b) in order to adopt the proclamation. The Board is required to review and continue the proclamation on either 14-day or 21-day intervals in accordance with California Government Code section 8630(c)(1) and (2), if there is a continuance of the local emergency.

During a period that the Board meets weekly, the proclamation must be reviewed every 14 days in accordance with California Government Code section 8630(c)(2). If the Board does not meet weekly (e.g. due to a holiday), the proclamation must be reviewed every 21 days in accordance with California Government Code section 8630(c)(1). The Board last took action to adopt the proclamation on December 7, 2004, and approval of this recommendation would continue the emergency for an additional period in accordance with Government Code section 8630. This County proclamation is continued awaiting a decision on a State proclamation of a disaster from the California Governor.

On October 19, 2004, commencing at about 400 p.m., and continuing throughout the day of October 20, 2004, rainstorms with periodic heavy rainfall caused flooding and debris flows in numerous areas throughout the County of San Bernardino. In conjunction with high winds in the mountain and high desert areas of the County, the rainstorms resulted in the closure of State Highway 18 near Crest Forest, and from Snow Valley to the Big Bear Dam, and the closure of several roads in Devore. A major traffic collision occurred involving at least twenty-seven (27) vehicles in the southbound lanes of Interstate Highway 15 near the top of the Cajon Pass in the area of the Oak Hills Road turnoff that caused injury to at least eleven (11) persons and the temporary closure of all southbound lanes. Another traffic collision in the northbound lanes of Interstate Highway 15 caused the temporary closure of all northbound lanes near Bailey Road in the Mountain Pass area. Accumulation of mud and debris caused the closure of State Highway 2 between State Highway 138 and Sheep Creek Road and Long Pine Canyon Road, which are two of only three means of reaching the Wrightwood community of 4,000 residents. Falling trees and downed power lines in the San Bernardino Mountains resulted in the need for four (4) California Department of Forestry hand

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# PROCLAMATION OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY RELATIVE TO HEAVY RAINFALL, FLOODING, AND DEBRIS FLOWS

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crews to clear fallen trees and power lines, and engage in sandbagging activities in the Crestline area. Rushing water downed a number of electric power poles in Lytle Creek, leaving the community without power. Emergency responders answered sixteen (16) rescue calls and successfully performed swift water rescues of two (2) people in Lytle Creek. The rainfall and flooding caused the derailment of a parked train railcar in Fontana, and suspension of Metrolink train service between Los Angeles and the Etiwanda Avenue Station on the Metrolink Rail System. Roads and bridges were also damaged throughout the County. While initial damage estimates related to the storm were \$1,832,000, damage estimates are now in excess of \$14,680,376 from this first storm.

On October 26, and October 27, 2004, the overnight rainstorm did not produce as much rain as expected. No weather-related injuries or significant property damage were reported. However, the rain did call for a mandatory evacuation for four (4) residents, and a voluntary evacuation of approximately fifty (50) homes on Greenwood and Woodlawn Avenues north of Kenwood Avenue in the community of Devore. The Inland Empire Chapter of the American Red Cross opened a shelter in San Bernardino in support of the mandatory and voluntary evacuations. San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control removed 5 horses from the Woodlawn Avenue area of Devore. The animals were sheltered at the Devore Animal Control Shelter. Additionally, various road closures were in effect, including a blocked culvert, which caused the shutdown of the I-215 at Palm Avenue in Devore, due to mud and debris flowing across all lanes. The closure lasted until 3:00 a.m. on October 28, 2004. There were also some power outages in the areas of Lake Arrowhead, Running Springs, and Forest Falls, which lasted for two (2) days, due to fallen trees. Various mountain area school districts closed on October 27, 2004, due to snow. The estimated cumulative damages from both storms total \$16,439,701. Additionally, on November 21, 2004, the overnight winter storm resulted in over 12 inches of snow on the San Bernardino Mountains range, and a ruptured petroleum pipeline and icy road conditions that closed the Cajon Pass for several hours. Additional rainstorms passed through San Bernardino County on November 27, 2004 and December 3 and 4, 2004.

The County Office of Emergency Services (County OES) will continue to collect and examine storm damage information from all storms, and will continue to provide updated information on forthcoming continuation/termination Board Agenda Items relating to these rainstorm events. Additionally, as we enter into the Fiscal Year 2004/2005 Winter Storm Season, and with a possible El Nino event storm year, there is a high probability that storm-related events will continue to impact the County.

Starting with the first rainstorm on October 19, 2004, those conditions caused extreme peril to the safety of persons and property, so consequently, on October 20, 2004, at 4:40 p.m., the Board Chairman signed a proclamation of the existence of a local emergency. This proclamation proclaimed a local emergency throughout San Bernardino County, ordered that a copy of the proclamation be forwarded to the Governor of California with the request that he proclaim that a state of emergency exists, and further ordered that a copy of the proclamation be forwarded to the State Director of the Office of Emergency Services.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY OTHERS:** This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Dennis Tilton, Deputy, 387-5246) on December 7, 2004, and the County Administrative Office (Wayne Thies, Administrative Analyst, 387-5409) on December 13, 2004.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Total financial impact is not known at this time. Preliminary estimates are approximately \$16,439,701 in costs to repair damage to roads, bridges, sewers, and water channels; perform emergency protection measures; and remove debris throughout the County. This figure increased from the original proclamation due to the continuation of damage assessment from the first storm, and additional damages from the second storm that occurred after the Board ratified the proclamation. The cost of returning all damaged County facilities to service is not yet known.

**SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS:** All

**PRESENTERS:** Peter R. Hills 387-5974  
Denise L. Benson 387-3998

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